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Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments

In the coming months, senior officials of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will hold a series of public forums at various U.S. locations to obtain public input for the development of the 2007 Farm Bill. The dates, locations, and times of the forums will be announced in USDA press releases (<http://www.usda.gov>).

The 2002 Farm Bill (officially entitled the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002) authorizes many USDA programs, including farm price and income support programs. New legislation will need to be enacted prior to the bill's expiration in 2007.

USDA intends to develop recommendations for the new farm bill and believes that public input is essential to this process. To comment, please respond to the questions below by December 30, 2005.

NOTE: All comments, including names and addresses, provided by respondents are a matter of public record. Comments may be viewed at the Department of Agriculture. To make arrangements to view comments, please contact the Office of the Executive Secretariat, Room 116A, Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250-3355.

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LEESBURG

USDA is seeking public comments on the following farm policy considerations:

Question 1: The challenges facing new farmers and ranchers as they enter agriculture.

Some observers note that while farm policy has served agriculture and the country well in the past, there are "unintended consequences" that should be addressed, such as the capitalization of program benefits into land prices. These higher land prices are cited as a barrier to entry into agriculture for new farmers; a factor in reduced profit for existing farmers; and a cause of weakened competitive position on the part of U.S. farmers compared with farmers in countries with lower-priced land.

How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?

Comment:

Question 2: The competitiveness of U.S. agriculture in global and domestic markets.

As bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade negotiations continue to result in reduced barriers to international trade, exports and imports of agricultural products are expected to become increasingly important factors in U.S. and global agriculture. Obtaining ever-greater access to growing foreign markets and being increasingly competitive in these and in domestic markets is essential for farm economic growth. One key factor in our ability to be competitive depends on the types of products demanded around the world in the next 10 to 20 years and our ability to produce products that meet this world demand.

How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to effectively compete in global markets?

Comment:



Question 3: The appropriateness and effectiveness of the distribution of farm program benefits.

A longstanding goal of farm policy has been to enhance and stabilize farm prices and incomes. Current farm programs, including crop insurance, distribute assistance based on past and current production levels. Some argue that the current farm support system encourages increases in farm size and results in the disproportionate distribution of program benefits to large farms. It has also been suggested that program incentives lead to increased production and lower market prices.

How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?

Comment:

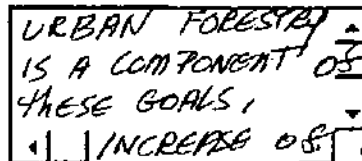


Question 4: The achievement of conservation and environmental goals.

While producing food and fiber are essential functions, agriculture also plays a major role in natural resource stewardship. Some have suggested that future farm policy might be anchored around the provision of tangible benefits such as cleaner water and air. Such an approach may be consistent with future World Trade Organization obligations on domestic support to agriculture, while also expanding farm programs to extend more broadly across agriculture, including private forest lands.

How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?

Comment:



INCREASE OF URBAN CANOPY COVER.
PROMOTES CLEARER AIR, WATER AND
STORM WATER MANAGEMENT. CANOPY

Question 5: The enhancement of rural economic growth.

Farming and rural America once were almost synonymous.

INCREASE ALSO
SAVES YEARS OF
RE-ASPHALTING
AND INCREASES
EXPENDITURES IN
RETAIL AREAS.

THIRD CLASS MAIL

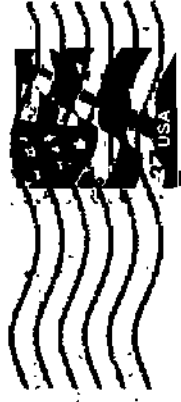


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